

Message Text

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PAGE 01 DAMASC 02217 201618Z
ACTION NEA-10

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FM AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7688

C O N F I D E N T I A L DAMASCUS 2217

STADIS////////////////////////////////

FOR NEA/ARN DRAPER

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: SHUM PINT SY
SUBJECT: HIRC MARK-UP; SYRIAN JEWRY

REF: 1) STATE 100185 2) DAMASCUS 2188

1. DAMASCUS REFTEL CROSSED WITH YOURS. I FEAR YOU WILL HAVE FOUND IT OF LITTLE HELP FOR YOUR IMMEDIATE PURPOSES. I HAVE JUST, HOWEVER, PAID A FAREWELL CALL ON SHIHABI, DURING WHICH I REVIEWED THE WHOLE ISSUE IN DETAIL. SO THERE WOULD BE NO MISUNDERSTANDINGS, I TOLD HIM ABOUT THE REACTIONS OF BOTH DAOUDY AND THE PRESIDENT TO MY EARLIER PRESENTATIONS. I STRESSED THE HUMANITARIAN NATURE OF THIS PROGRAM AND THE DESIRE OF BOTH THE BROOKLYN COMMUNITY AND WASHINGTON THAT IT CONTINUE. SAID IT WAS ESSENTIAL THAT THE DOOR REMAIN OPEN FOR THESE WOMEN TO DEPART FOR MARRIAGE, LEST THOSE WHO WISH TO DAMAGE SYRO-AMERICAN RELATIONS SEIZE ON THIS QUESTION AS A STICK TO BEAT THE ADMINISTRATION. URGED THAT EVEN IF THE ENTIRE LIST OF 52 IS NOT APPROVED FOR IMMEDIATE DEPARTURE THAT THERE BE A STEADY NUMBER PERMITTED TO LEAVE MONTHLY FOR NEW YORK.

2. SHIHABI COMMENTED INSTANTLY THAT THE MARRIAGE ISSUE WAS
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A HUMANITARIAN ONE ADDING THAT HE FULLY UNDERSTOOD MY POINT ABOUT THE ADVERSE POLITICAL EFFECTS ON OUR RELATIONSHIP SHOULD THIS PROGRAM NOT PROCEED. HE PROMISED TO MAKE THIS POINT STRONGLY TO THE PRESIDENT ON LATTER'S RETURN FROM INDIA. HE SAID HE FELT THAT SOMETHING WOULD BE WORKED OUT WHICH WOULD MEET BOTH SYRIAN NEEDS AND OUR OWN.

3. RECOGNIZING THE SHORT DEADLINE YOU ARE WORKING UNDER
VIS-A-VIS HOUSE FLOOR MARK-UP IN MID-MAY, I SHOULD MENTION
SHALOM'S REMARKS TO ME ON A RELATED QUESTION WHEN WE HAD
DINNER WITH SOLARZ LAST WEEK. SHALOM DESCRIBED
A NUMBER OF INDIVIDUAL CASES OF SYRIAN JEWISH
TRAVELLERS IN PAST FEW MONTHS LEAVING SYRIA ON
AUTHORIZED TRIPS FOR PURPOSES OF BUSINESS, MEDICAL
TREATMENT AND TOURISM. WE CANNOT ARGUE THE RULES
AFFECTING VISITS ABROAD BY SYRIAN JEWS IS BACK TO THE
RELAXED STATE OF THE FIRST HALF OF 1977, BUT CLEARLY
LAST SUMMER'S TOTAL BAN IS GRADUALLY RELAXING. WILL
SEND YOU TOMORROW ANY COMMENTS WE PICK UP FROM TOUTAH
AND RABBI HAMRA ABOUT THE CURRENT TRAVEL PROCEDURES
AFFECTING THE COMMUNITY WHEN THEY ATTEND RECEPTION AT
RESIDENCE TONIGHT.
MURPHY

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